

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5278

As of January 29, 2009

Title: An act relating to making technical changes to boiler and unfired pressure vessel statutes.

Brief Description: Making technical changes to boiler and unfired pressure vessel statutes.

Sponsors: Senators King, Kohl-Welles and Shin; by request of Department of Labor & Industries.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection: 1/26/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Staff: Ingrid Mungia (786-7423)

Background: Certain boilers and unfired pressure vessels are subject to regulation by the Board of Boiler Rules (Board) and inspection by the Department of Labor and Industries (Department). The Board develops rules based on nationally or internationally accepted engineering standards. The Board also adopts standards such as the American Society of Mechanical Engineers' (ASME) code. The Director of the Department approves rules, appoints the Chief Inspector, and assesses penalties against persons who violate safety standards for boilers and unfired pressure vessels.

The Chief Inspector issues "inspection certificates" for boilers and unfired pressure vessels that are found to comply with the Board's rules. The Board grants "special installation and operating permits" and "special permits" for other boilers and unfired pressure vessels.

Certain boilers and unfired pressure vessels are exempt from regulation. These include some water tanks that operate at 130 degrees or less, and small unfired pressure vessels and hot water heaters. Other boilers and unfired pressure vessels are exempt from inspection requirements, but subject to regulations governing construction, installation, and repair.

Certain boilers and unfired pressure vessels are inspected annually, and others are inspected biennially. The Board, however, may provide for longer periods between inspections of power boilers and unfired pressure vessels subject to internal corrosion.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Chief Inspector and the deputy inspectors are required to furnish performance bonds. The state pays the cost of the bonds.

Summary of Bill: The term "inspection certificate" is used in place of the terms "special installation and operating permit" and "special permit." The exemptions from regulation are modified. The exemption for some water tanks is for those that operate at ambient temperature (rather than 130 degrees or less). The exemption for small unfired pressure vessels is changed to conform to American Society of Mechanical Engineer standards. The exemption for small domestic hot water heaters is moved to a separate subsection.

The Board of Boiler Rules is authorized to provide for longer periods between internal inspections of low pressure heating boilers.

The bonding requirement for the Chief Inspector and the deputy inspectors is repealed.

Other technical changes are made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2009.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is a bill at the request of the Department. The bill updates an area that has not been looked at for many years. It will reduce some unnecessary inspections and clarify specific requirements. Consumers will not have to empty their boilers as frequently. This bill reduces regulations. It allows the Board of Boilers rules to extend the length of inspection and draining of the tanks. The bond requirement was once necessary when cash was being exchanged for service and that is no longer an issue. The terms are made consistent in the bill to ensure it is the correct term when dealing with the correct permit. The City of Seattle supports this legislation.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator King, prime sponsor; Patrick Woods, Department of Labor & Industries; Larry Leet, City of Seattle.